



**PHI** | Healthy  
UK | Urban Places

Empowering communities and neighbourhoods

# Not Just a Train Station

## Community Visions for the New Station & Southern Gateway Regeneration



Evidence Summary n.2  
Publication date: September 2025



<https://www.phiuk.org/healthy-urban-places>

# Background

Healthy Urban Places ran a series of consultations between November 2024 and January 2025 for Bradford Council to explore community perceptions on the proposed Bradford Southern Gateway train station and redevelopment of its surrounding area.



We wanted to know what makes a happy, healthy train station.



The consultations targeted communities with conventionally minoritised voices.

- Eighteen community members who were from one of the targeted groups (young people (aged 16-18), refugees and asylum seekers, or south Asian women) took part in one of three consultations.
- They shared their opinions about using public transport, and the current Bradford Interchange train and bus station. Images were used to help visualise potential changes.
- The process was recorded through mind mapping, selecting of photos and audio recording. The consultation findings were then collated and themed.

## Key Findings

1. Current Train Services Limit Opportunities
2. Desires for the Future
  - New Location Accessible & Integrated with Surroundings
  - Better Connections, New Horizons
  - Not Just a Train Station





## Key Findings

### Current Train Services Limit Opportunities

Train travel was enjoyed, but problems of cost, reliability, and infrastructure discouraged train travel, stymying social and economic opportunities.

Community members primarily travelled by train for education and leisure. Many people felt that train travel was less stressful and more relaxing than other forms of transportation. Using public transport provided opportunities for social interaction, personal independence and navigation.

However, outdated infrastructure and facilities, unreliable services, uncomfortable journeys and complex connections discouraged travel by train. Costs could be prohibitive, especially for young people and families. Journey time and the distance to the train station were also considerations, and it was felt cars were ultimately faster, cheaper, and more convenient along the Calder Valley Line.

### Desires for the Future

#### Accessible Location & Integrated within Surroundings

Participants felt strongly that the proposed train station should be close to the city centre, with transport links under one roof, and with pleasant, accessible, dedicated walking and cycling routes to the centre.

Some had concerns that a walking route into the town centre along existing busy roads would create a negative experience for Bradford visitors and discourage use of the train station.

The regenerated surrounding area should be harmonious with Bradford's existing skyline and emphasise access to nature, helping adults and children spend time outside in a safe, clean, pleasant environment.



Rotterdam Centraal Station may provide inspiration for how trams, buses, cycling and walking routes can be integrated.

## Better Connections, New Horizons

Residents were very hopeful that a new through connection would bring opportunities for work, education and leisure to Bradford Residents.

Faster, reliable journeys to Leeds and Manchester would expand their horizons and create new work, education, and social opportunities.

“

**My husband now, he would never look for [a job in] Manchester because he would think it'd take me an hour to get there, hour to get back. But if he knew the train could get you there in half an hour. That might expand the, his field in terms in terms of looking for a job.**

- Participant

## Not just a train station

Community members desired a new community hub that incorporated green spaces, economic and entertainment opportunities, as well as access to transportation.

Desires for the new train station included:

- Aesthetically pleasing social hub, which balanced efficient navigation with quiet areas to rest.
- An airy space, with greenery both inside and outside the train station, well-lit by both natural and artificial light.
- Modern, safe, and well-maintained facilities were necessities – particularly free, accessible toilets, good signage, and face-to-face service.
- Cafes, shops, comfortable seating, play space for children, and open markets made train stations more attractive, while potentially creating opportunities for small businesses.

## Key Features



Free, maintained toilet facilities necessary for comfortable, stressfree travel.



Helpful and supportive staff, especially for young people beginning to travel independently.



Natural light, greenery both indoors and outdoors.



Aesthetic celebrating Bradford's industrial history, heritage, and modern status as a city of sanctuary.

## Acknowledgements

This work was supported by UK Research and Innovation funding for the Healthy Urban Places consortium (grant reference MR/Y022785/1), which is part of Population Health Improvement UK (PHI UK), a national research network which works to transform health and reduce inequalities through change at the population level.

This report is independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research Yorkshire and Humber ARC (NIHR200166). The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the National Institute for Health Research or the Department of Health and Social Care.”

Healthy Urban Places, a programme hosted by Born in Bradford, is working with communities and local partners to better understand how local urban places impact health and what improvements could achieve the best outcomes. Our approach focuses on generating this understanding with people in a way which can influence policy and practice to make our urban places healthier for everyone.

#### Authors

Helen Rattray, Cathy Knamiller, Huma Zille, Emily Nix  
from Bradford Institute for Health Research

#### Suggested citation

Rattray, H., Knamiller, C., Zille, H., Nix, E., Not Just a Train Station: Public Consultation for the New Station & Southern Gateway Regeneration. Bradford: PHI UK | Healthy Urban Places, 2025



#### Contact

healthyurbanplaces@bthft.nhs.uk  
<https://www.phiuk.org/healthy-urban-places>